

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	
Project Name: Spectrum's Havre to Malta Fiber	Proposed Implementation Date: 2020
Proponent: Spectrum Pacific West, LLC 12405 Powerscourt Drive, St Louis, MO 63131	
Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to install a new underground telecommunications fiber cable. The area of impact will be 20 feet in width, 10 feet on either side of a center line with a total area of impact of 1.474 acres. The purpose of the Right of Way Easement is for the installation, inspection, operation, maintenance, repair and replacement of an underground fiber telecommunication cable.	
Location: Lots 2, 3 & SE ¼, NE ¼ of SEC 36 - TWP 31N - RNG 26E.	County: Phillips

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Spectrum Pacific West LLC has submitted a Right of Way Easement application to the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Glasgow Unit Office to place an underground telecommunications cable on School Trust land. Spectrum Pacific West has also contacted the surface lessee and explained the purpose for the Right of Way Easement application.
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	The following Government agencies that have jurisdiction for this type of project are United States Army Corps of Engineers, United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resource and Conservation Service, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, United States Fish & Wildlife Service, Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and the Water Rights Division. The various permits needed have been issued.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	<p>Action Alternative: Grant a Right of Way Easement to Spectrum Pacific West to place an underground telecommunication cable on School Trust land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Deny a Right of Way Easement to Spectrum Pacific West to place an</p>

	underground telecommunication cable on School Trust land.
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II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS
4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compatible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?	<p>The area of impact contains Harlake clay and Havre loam complex of soils. This soil type consists of clay loam soils that have moderate erosion potential. The area is currently managed for livestock grazing and agricultural practices. No unusual features are present and no special reclamation considerations are necessary.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This type of project would temporarily impact the soils within the Right of Way corridor on the School Trust land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no changes to soils on the School Trust land.</p>
5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?	<p>This project requires a temporary disturbance near the Milk River for the purpose of boring the line below the riverbed. The Mile River provides excellent wildlife habitat, aquatic habitat, provides drinking water, and is used recreationally.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This project would have very minimal disturbance due to boring the telecommunication cable beneath the riverbed. No degradation of water quality due to the installation of the telecommunication cable is expected.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to water quality, and distribution.</p>
6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulates be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	<p>There are no special restrictions/air quality regulations in place in the area of impact.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This type of project on School Trust land would have minimal impact to air quality. There may temporarily be some dust that would</p>

	<p>become airborne during installation of the fiber telecommunications cable.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to air quality.</p>
<p>7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>The vegetative community in the project area consists of both native and non-native grasses and forbs which are generally grazed by livestock and agricultural land used for hay and small grain production. No rare plants or cover types are present. The trencher used fills in the disturbed area as it installs the fiber cable leaving minimal impact.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The vegetative community would be impacted directly along the small corridor where the telecommunication line is being trenched in. There may be an increased opportunity for introduction of annual weeds from installation.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the plant communities on the School Trust land.</p>
<p>8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>The School Trust land provides temporary habitat to deer, antelope, upland birds and various songbirds. However, due to the proximity of the highway and the lack of cover in the area, the use of the project area by wildlife is infrequent. This project requires a temporary disturbance to the Milk river. This water source provides excellent wildlife habitat, aquatic habitat, provides drinking water, and is used recreationally.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The installation of the telecommunication cable may temporarily impact wildlife use of the area due to the presence of vehicles and humans, but no long-term impacts are expected.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the possible use of the School Trust land as wildlife habitat.</p>
<p>9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat</p>	<p>This project is within General Greater Sage-Grouse habitat as outlined by the Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team (MSGOT). Spectrum Pacific West submitted the project to MSGOT for review prior to</p>

<p>present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern?</p>	<p>submitting the application, and received approval along with guidelines to follow, back from MSGOT.</p> <p>Twelve species of special concern are listed as being present in the area, including: Sprague's Pipit, American Bittern, Greater Sage-Grouse, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Loggerhead Shrike, Long-billed Curlew, McCown's Longspur, Northern Redbelly Dace, Iowa Darter, Northern Pearl Dace, Sauger, and Black-tailed Prairie Dog. There are no other sensitive habitat types present in the area of impact.</p> <p>Action Alternative: By following the recommendations made by MSGOT, impacts to sage-grouse would be mitigated during and after the installation process. The project has no impact on any unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the environmental resources.</p>
<p>10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>A class 3 cultural resource survey for cultural resource inventory has been conducted. Cultural survey 2011-6-8 identified no cultural resources in the area of impact.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project would have no impact on any known historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The proposed project will have no impact on historical, archaeological or paleontological sites under this alternative.</p>
<p>11. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?</p>	<p>The project is located next to a highway. The project will be visible to the general public during installation.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This type of project on School Trust land would not impact the aesthetics of the surrounding area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No impacts to aesthetics associated with the School Trust land.</p>
<p>12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR</p>	

ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	<p>Environmental resources in the area are not specifically limited and are not affected by the proposed project. No nearby activities will affect the project.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The proposed project would place no additional demands on environmental resources in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No additional demands placed on environmental resources.</p>
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	<p>The author of this document doesn't know of any other studies, plans or projects taking place on this tract of School Trust land.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Proposed project would not impact any other plans or studies on the School Trust land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the plans or studies that Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has on the School Trust land.</p>

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	<p>Action Alternative: There may be some safety risks for workers during the construction of the project. This should be mitigated by using trained professionals with proper safety efforts.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to human health or safety.</p>
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	<p>Action Alternative: The project would have no impacts to industrial, commercial and/or agricultural activities.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to industrial, commercial and/or agricultural activities.</p>

<p>16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project may create jobs for the companies that would install the fiber telecommunications cable.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to quantity and distribution of employment under this alternative.</p>
<p>17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the local and state tax base.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the local and state tax base.</p>
<p>18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project would place no additional demands for government services.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no demand for government services.</p>
<p>19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>The School Trust land is managed for typical agricultural activities (livestock grazing and crop production).</p> <p>Action Alternative: No impacts to locally adopted environmental plans and goals anticipated.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No impacts to locally adopted environmental plans and goals.</p>
<p>20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?</p>	<p>This tract is accessible from the adjacent highway. Proposed project would have no impact to access of the School Trust land.</p> <p>Action Alternative: No changes to public land access or recreational potential would occur.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No changes to public land access or recreational potential will occur.</p>
<p>21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project would not impact the density and distribution of population and housing.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the density and distribution of population and housing.</p>

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	<p>Action Alternative: The project would result in enhanced telecommunications capabilities for residents in the surrounding area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the social structures.</p>
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	<p>Action Alternative: The project would not impact the cultural uniqueness and diversity of this rural area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the cultural uniqueness and diversity.</p>
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	<p>This telecommunications project is intended to provide greater telecommunication capabilities in the surrounding area/communities. This is a very rural area with limited capabilities currently.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Allowing installation of the cable across School Trust land would have little economic impact to the School Trust but would provide surrounding communities with increased telecommunications capabilities.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the social and economic circumstances under this alternative.</p>

EA Checklist Prepared By: s/Luke Gunderson\s Date: 03/25/2020  
 Luke Gunderson Land Use Specialist

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Action Alternative
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	No negative impacts anticipated.
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:	

☐ EIS

☐ More Detailed EA

☒ No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By: Matthew Poole Glasgow Unit Manager  
Name Title

s/Matthew Poole\s Date: April 3, 2020  
Signature